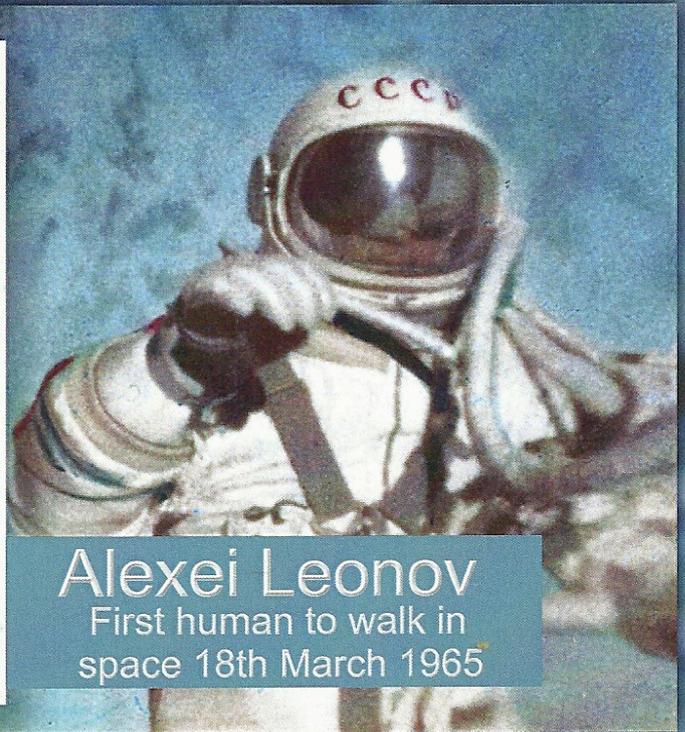


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ORBIT



Alexei Leonov
First human to walk in
space 18th March 1965

1934 -2019



January 2020

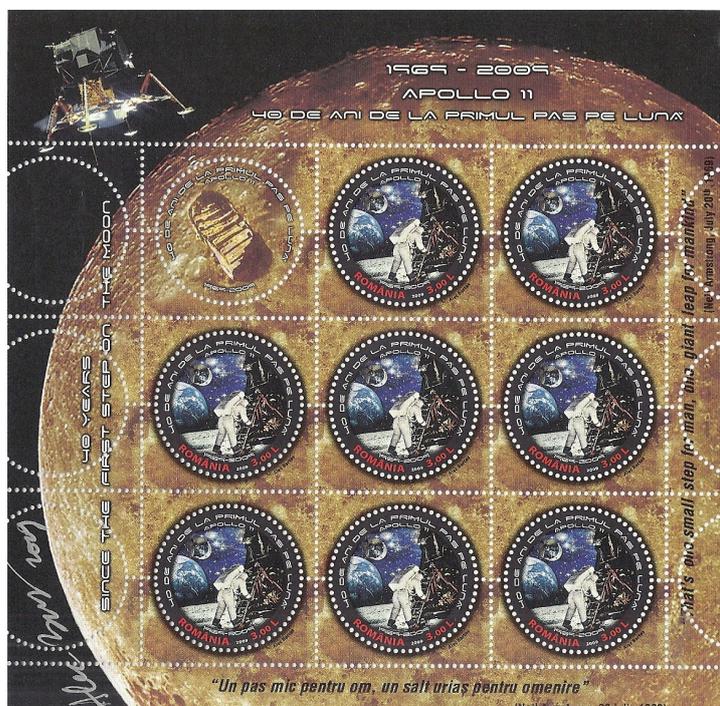
ASTRO SPACE STAMP SOCIETY

Designing Romania's Apollo XI 50th Anniversary Issues

ASSS member **Alec Bartos** writes about how he came to design last year's tribute to the First Man on the Moon for his home country.

It was early in 2018 when I contacted Romfilatelia, the company responsible for stamp issues in Romania, and advised them that 2019 would be the 50th anniversary of the first step on the Moon—an event that would be widely celebrated around the World. Later that year I received the invitation to take part in the design contest for some of the projected 2019 Romanian stamp issues.

It was with great pleasure that I found on that list the “50 YEARS SINCE MAN’S FIRST STEP ON THE MOON” a planned two stamp issue. I started brainstorming right away. The research went on to see what was already done on the extensive list of Apollo 11 stamps issued around the world in order to submit a proposal. I’ve always tried to be original on my work. It’s not an easy task when more than 1700 different stamp designs issued by postal administrations from all over the world (see Peter Hoffman’s list) are trying to illustrate the great achievement humans had realized back in 1969. Maybe even more difficult for me as in 2009 I had been chosen to design the 40th anniversary stamps for Romania with a highly appreciated and original design (see picture below) so the stakes were higher from the start.



Apollo 11 40th anniversary stamps – Romania 2009 – © Alec Bartos



I had to submit at least a quality equivalent proposal and to be original too. Not much later in the year I faced an interesting situation when the only Romanian cosmonaut Mr. Dumitru-Dorin Prunariu sent me an email where in response to Romfilatelia’s request for advice and support for documenting the future Apollo 11 stamp issues he was officially recommending me as the “specialist”. I was now the adviser for the stamp issue but at the same time a candidate in the design contest... A bit of a conflict of interest situation which I overcame successfully. But sharing all the info I had on the subject with the other designer candidates raised the stakes one more time.

“We are pleased to inform you that the design presented by you at the 2019 Stamp Design Contest - 50 Years since Man's First Step on the Moon, has enjoyed the jury's appreciation.” read the email informing me that I had won the design contest. The same email informed me that the commission does require some modifications on the designs but the good news was that they decided to include a Souvenir Sheet in the issue. I proceeded to work immediately. Aside the documentation and the guarantee of correctly depicting the theme, as a rule the winning designer is in charge with the First Day postmark design and the FDC illustration. Two additional Maximum Card designs were requested by the commission in this case.



Early design proposals for the 50 YEARS SINCE MAN’S FIRST STEP ON THE MOON - 2019 Romanian stamp issue. © Alec Bartos

Versions of this article in Italian, and English (idiom-checked by your Editor) appeared in *AdAstra* #42 in October 2019

Being also the adviser for this stamp issue I proposed also some Postal Stationery envelopes such as the one I had designed for the Apollo 11 2009 issue but ironically it was me who killed the chance to have them printed... It was because, some months before, I had done everything I could to include at the last minute the Aeromfila 2019 - Oberth Postal Stationery design on the Post's issues list (shown below) I had succeeded with those but as a result now there were no more places for Apollo 11 envelopes on the list. This was because there is a limited number of issues a postal administration can publish according to UPU - Universal Postal Union rules.



50 YEARS SINCE MAN'S FIRST STEP ON THE MOON - Romania 2019 First Day Cover © Alec Bartos



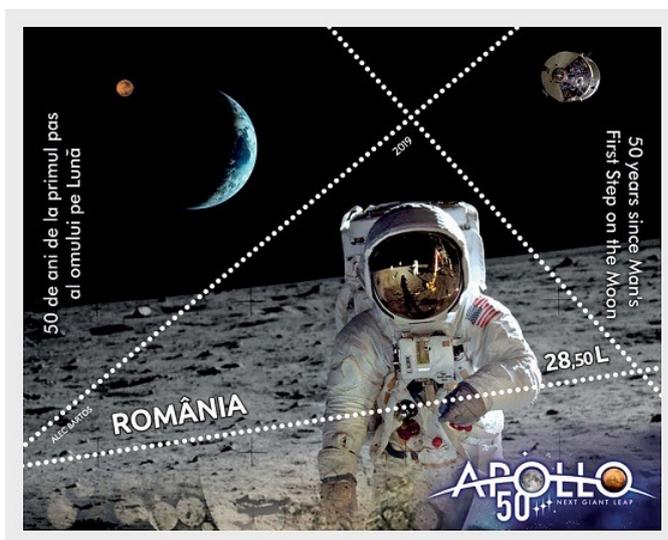
DL Postal Stationery designed for the Romanian national philately exhibition with international participation 125 years since the birth of Hermann Oberth - 90 years since the launch of his work "Space Navigation Paths" - Aeromfila 2019 Sibiu, Romania © Alec Bartos

Revised versions of my stamp designs were accepted without further modifications and after that I prepared the FDC, FD postmark and Maximum Cards designs. First day of issue was chosen the 11th of July 2019 so the stamps would already be on the market for the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11 landing on 20th of July 1969.

The issue is comprised of two stamps and a souvenir sheet. The two stamps illustrate memorable aspects of the mission. The first stamp, that has a face value of Lei 5, depicts the moment when the carrying rocket of Apollo 11, Saturn V rises from the ground with the astronauts Neil A. Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin E. Aldrin Jr. aboard, on July 16th, 1969, from the Kennedy 39A Space Centre Launch Complex and a picture of the LM as it approaches the CSM for docking, with the image of Earth rising in the background. Overlapping on the simulated perforation is the CSM image. On the lower part of the stamp behind the "Romania" legend and the official Apollo 50th anniversary logo there is a colour manipulated cropped segment of the image used for the Maximum Card 1. (See image below).

The second stamp that has a face value of Lei 8.50, illustrates Buzz Aldrin on the Moon as he descends the LM ladder with a big Earth in the background. On the right side of the stamp is celebrated one of the founding fathers of the astronautics, the Romanian born Herman Oberth, alongside Wernher von Braun, his student and the man behind the development of Apollo programme. Overlapping the simulated perforation is the official Apollo 11 mission patch.

The FDC cachet uses one of the iconic Apollo 11 images, Buzz Aldrin saluting the US flag on the Moon as well the mission patch and Apollo 50 official logo. As with the 40th anniversary stamp designs, the statement "There is no up or down in space" was in my mind when I conceived the composition, resulting in the circular stamp of the Souvenir Sheet surrounded by elements placed without an obvious suggestion of a spatial axis, so the same concept of spatiality and lack of symmetry of space was in my mind when I've started to work on the 50th anniversary stamps. The simulated perforation aside its aesthetical qualities are promoted by the overlapping images of the LM and the Apollo 11 patch which are intended to give a feel of spatiality and the depth of space.



50 YEARS SINCE MAN'S FIRST STEP ON THE MOON - Romania 2019 Imperforated Souvenir Sheet © Alec Bartos

The imperforated souvenir sheet face value Lei 28.50 features Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin Jr. on the Moon, photographed by Neil Armstrong, seen in the reflection of the visor, as is the "Eagle" LM.

"The next giant leap", to Mars referenced in the Apollo 50 logo is once again illustrated behind the crescent Earth in the background.



Maximum Card No. 1 “50 YEARS SINCE MAN’S FIRST STEP ON THE MOON” - Romania 2019. Cropped photograph of daguerreotype* attributed to J. W. Draper, believed to have been taken on March 26, 1840 from Wooster and Fourth Streets, New York City. The image is mirror-reversed. Colour enhanced. © Alec Bartos

(*Dr John William Draper. Journal of the British Astronomical Association, Vol. 90, p. 565 – 57)

As previously mentioned the stamp issues were complemented with two Maximum Cards. For the first one I had chosen the Oldest Surviving Photo of the Moon. “The picture above - one most typically used to show Draper’s achievement - is a photograph of a daguerreotype that was by all best accounts made by Draper on the night of March 26, 1840, three days after the historic announcement of his photographic success.

The extensively-degraded plate shows part of a vertically “flipped” last-quarter Moon—so lunar south is near the

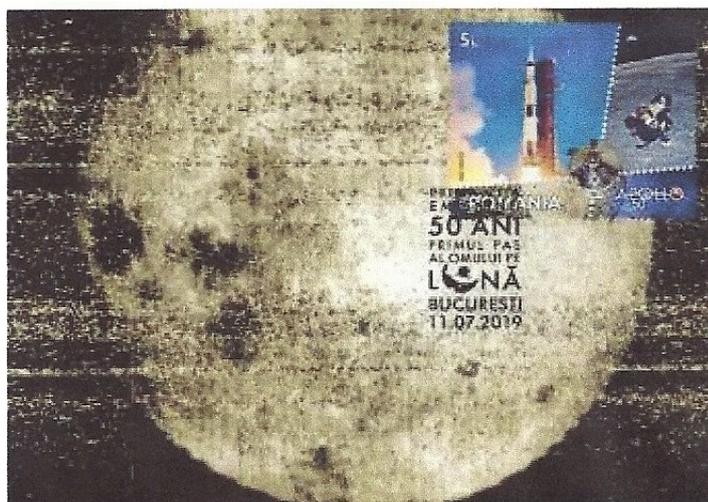


Mirror-reversed Image of the daguerreotype attributed to John W. Draper, believed to have been taken March 26, 1840 from his rooftop observatory at New York University (at Wooster and 4th Streets).

top—which would indicate his use of a device called a heliostat to keep light from the Moon focused on the plate during a long 20-minute exposure. It’s the same size as some of Draper’s earlier unsuccessful images and uses the same circular image area, and although it was later obtained from a used bookstore in Greenwich Village the daguerreotype was most likely made by Draper himself.” See the full-size image above.

“So this was not Draper’s first successful Moon photo, but it very well may have been one of his first to be publicly displayed at the New York Lyceum on April 13, 1840 (and, obviously, one of the few that survive to this day)”, according to Jasom Major, <https://lightsinthedark.com>

For the second Maximum Card I chose the first image of the “Dark side of the Moon”. The historic photo – the first of the far side of the Moon – was taken by Luna 3 on October 7, 1959. The dark patches at left include Mare Crisium (on the near side), Mare Smythii, and Mare Marginis (on the border of the near and far sides). At bottom is Mare Australe. The dark patch above right of centre is Mare Moscoviense, and below right of centre is Tsiolkovsky crater. Below and to the right of Tsiolkovsky is Jules Verne crater. The Moon 3 probe was built by ОКБ-1 (Design Office No. 1) currently Ракетно-космическая корпорация «Энергия» им. С. П. Королёва (Rocket-Space Energy Company - Sergei Pavlovich Korolev).



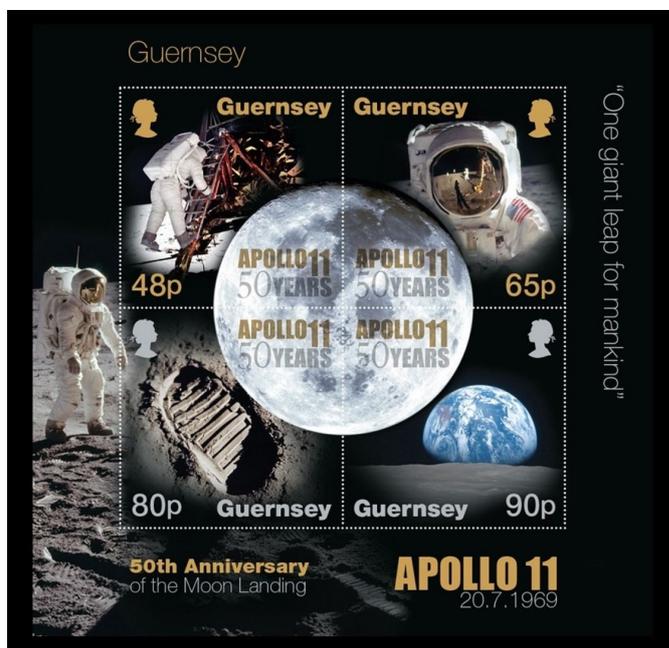
50 YEARS SINCE MAN’S FIRST STEP ON THE MOON - Romania 2019 Maximum Card No. 2 – The first image returned by Luna 3 showed the far side of the Moon, very different from the near side, most noticeably in its lack of lunar maria (the dark areas) Colour enhanced. © Alec Bartos The original image is public domain.

Regarding page composition, the three value stamp issue was printed in sheets of 20 stamps, and minisheets of 5 stamps + 1 label (vignette) and the imperforated souvenir sheet. Excluding the Maximum Cards all the images used in the compositions are from the Apollo 11 mission courtesy of NASA. These includes the images used as a background for the stamp sheets and the two souvenir sheets.

50 YEARS SINCE MAN'S FIRST STEP ON THE MOON - Romania 2019 Post sheets © Alec Bartos

More Apollo XI Anniversary Issues

See also p 28 and p 39



Excluding the 20 stamp sheets the stamps are available here: <https://www.wopaplus.com/en/stamps/product/&pid=56192>

Full technical specifications are available at: <http://www.romfilatelia.ro/en/50-years-since-mansfirst-step-on-the-moon-2/> (accessed sept 24, 2019)

The above paper also mentions "Documentation provided by the Astrophilatelic Commission of the Romanian Philately Federation." Psst! That's me!



Alec Bartos (Ex Facebook)

